LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of Left Unity

Founded 1921 Editor: R. Palme Dutt

CHAINS & SLAVERY

R. Page Arnot

TESTING TIME FOR THE TUC

Bernard Panter

CRISIS OF NATIONALISED INDUSTRIES

Jack Dunn

David Wynn on Students and the Trade Unions
William J. Pomeroy on Collision Course in Africa
Tony McNally on Youth and the Labour Movement
R. Palme Dutt on *LM* 1921-26

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LABOUR MONTHLY

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Notes of the Month

CHAINS AND SLAVERY

'Now's the day, and now's the hour:
See the front of battle lour,
See approach proud Edward's power—
Chains and slavery.'

January 16, 1971

High up the estuary of the Thames, it is told King Canute (or Knut) set his throne between the tide-marks on the as-yet-unpolluted strand and bade the advancing waters to cease their onward motion. 'Thus far, and no further!' It was just short of 950 years ago; and Knut got his feet wet. At mid-summer 1970 far down the same estuary Prime Minister Edward Heath announced that the waves of inflation were to stop 'at a stroke'; and that the rising tide of wage demands (caused by rising prices) must halt abruptly at a pre-set level of percentages; while Robert Carr, his Productivity Panjandrum, was bidden to build such a breakwater and embankment as would chain the waves, contain them in still, if not stagnant waters, and stop all nasty tides for ever.

Flattery for Sale

Children, brought up on the moral fable, are told that the incident occurred as a demonstration by the great King, Canutus Magnus, that his courtiers were gross flatterers, if not blasphemers, when they claimed that His Majesty could stop both wind and wave. It is poignant comment on the development of monopoly capitalism in Britain that it should have been proud Edward Heath himself who made the first utterance; and that his flatulent courtiers in press and parliament should have to come in afterwards to proclaim his enormous potency upon the wave motions of economic phenomena. For the bowing and scraping 'courtiers' of Fleet Street, the vast presses grinding out their daily myth in millions of copies are an essential adjunct in the conspiracy of the big capitalists amid the waves of inflation to destroy the effectiveness of trade unionism.

The Myth-Mongers

The press lords, owners too in broadcasting, use their position to distort, invent and suppress. How the mass media are 'tuned in'

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or 'gleichgeschaltet' was shown by the demonstrations and strikes on January 12, falsely reported as 'a flop'—whereas their magnitude in city after city must have sent cold shivers down the spine of some of the manufacturers whose workshops stood empty that day, and made them wonder if it had been wise to put all their money on proud Edward. But their myths, essential ingredients in the cooking up of an 'atmosphere', did not begin yesterday, or last month, or last year. In the last decade, and also earlier, the myth-mongers were busy.

The Strike-Ridden Myth

Throughout the 'sixties the behaviour of the newspapers about strikes convinced the majority of the upper and middle classes that Britain was 'strike-ridden', that Britain was going downhill because it had peculiar evils in strike after strike through the behaviour of the working class in a way from which no other civilised country suffered. This astonishing myth was steadily built up by the simplest of all methods, namely, the suppression of the truth day after day and month after month until the opposite of the facts became an article of faith. Soon everyone knew, or thought they knew, that as sure as the sun was in the heavens so strikes and strikers were the bane of Britain, a bane from which happier climes were free. All nonsense, all rubbish, all lies—but sufficiently virulent to induce a Labour Minister to insert in her White Paper of January 1969, *In Place of Strife*, anti-strike provisions that were not warranted by facts nor by anything in the Donovan Report.

The Plain Facts

In *Reason*, the shilling pamphlet published by the Trades Union Congress to put the case 'against the Government's proposals on Industrial Relations,' there is a frontispiece. Here is shown a diagram exhibiting the facts about strikes, giving the total number of working days lost per 1,000 persons in a series of eight of the most important countries of Europe, Asia, North America and Australia. It shows that the working days lost in the United Kingdom were least of all those recorded. France also had relatively few. Australia had not quite double the British number. All the others, United States, Italy, Eire, India, Canada had four times up to five times and even six times as many working days lost as in the United Kingdom. These facts, of which the source is the International Labour Office whose figures for over half a century have been regarded as unchallengeable, were sedulously suppressed for a series of years

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in most of the newspapers. The Royal Commission sitting from 1965-68 could do little more than lock the stable door after the steed was stolen.

The Kernel of the Matter

What is this 'Industrial Relations', falsely styled on page one 'A bill to amend the law relative to employers and workers . . .'? It is a bill to rip up, rend, and tear to pieces the law under which men and women have lived over a hundred years and more. There is no *amendment* in it, but much spoliation and destruction both of law and of custom. It is designed to alter the way of life of twenty-five million working people to turn them into second class citizens again, to blow sky-high their voluntary self-government, to subject them to a bureaucrat with despotic power to say how, why, or under what conditions they are allowed to combine or not to combine, to hale them before a new set of jumped-up judges in a new set of courts, with crushing fines, damages and imprisonment—all under new sugary-sounding names. This monstrous bill, in its 150 clauses and its eight schedules comprising many scores more of new regulations, is a complete code for something that is no longer 20th century Britain. It harks back to the last great inflation, the Tudor period with its 'Court of Star Chamber', 'Court of High Commission' and other engines of tyranny and suppression. That historic analogy is certainly there: but a closer description was given this winter by the shop steward reported on Granada Television who said 'It would be slavery.'

What is Slavery?

The beginner in social studies, for example in any system of comparative jurisprudence, soon learns the distinctive kinds of human society and the different forms of servitude. He knows the distinction between slave and free, or chattel-slave and wage-slave: the slave owned, kept and fed by his master and with no time of his own; the free labourer whose time is his own, but must hire himself out to a master—or else starve: whilst between these polar opposites is the serf, tied to the soil and therefore unfree, and owing days of his time each month to his lord, his feudal superior. But these categories, however valid in the abstract, are put to the test by any one of ten thousand rapidly changing societies: and many encounter peculiarities (some of them mentioned in the footnotes to *Capital*) such as one form of servitude taking on the mask of another form. The capitalist mode of production in Britain, basically

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unchanged for generations, has nevertheless in this century undergone significant developments, to some of which attention was first called sixty years ago by the Catholic publicist Hilaire Belloc in a book, widely discussed at the time in the labour movement, entitled *The Servile State*. A state in which one class may not form voluntary associations, but must enter licensed institutions only, while the employing class can hale them up for 'unfair practices' before special law courts, and the freedom of speech within the workshop is taken away, has already a resemblance to a *Servile State*, to a modern variety of slavery.

A Vicious Parody of Marx's Teaching

It was Marx who discovered the laws of development of human society and the part played by the struggle of classes. He did not call economic classes into existence: but those that were there already he described. Edward Heath and Carr on the other hand have prescribed the role the workers shall play, prescribed the organisations they shall belong to, and finally prescribed the courts before which they shall appear and suffer fines, and by which their shop stewards shall be victimised and proscribed. In the slave-owners' Roman Empire also there was no question of equality before the law. A recent examination of legal privilege therein* reveals the extent to which the *spectabiles* (members of the master class and such like) were guaranteed against heavy civil damages or, in criminal law, against the penalties which lesser men had to suffer.

Foul Blow at Democracy

Whether or not monopoly capitalism is beginning to assume aspects of slave society and whether a new kind of slave owning and oppression could develop from Heath's new Tory war on the unions, may be a matter for debate. But there is no debating possible about pros and cons of its effect on democracy. It is wholly destructive in its effect, destructive in every item. If there be anyone on the Labour Party side in parliament or without, who thinks that some good can come out of some part of this bill, or that while this Tory bill would of course have to be repealed an alternative measure embodying some of its better provisions could then be passed once there is again a Labour majority in parliament, he has lost grasp of the real principles of democracy and is living in a cloud-cuckoo-land, speculating about probable, possible, feasible, practicable futures.

* *Past and Present*, December 1968.

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There is no place or time for such nonsense or such nonsense mongers. 'Now's the day, and now's the hour.'

The Meaning of Democracy

Slavery as such is primarily an economic category, covering relations of production. Democracy falls under a different heading. Democracy, or what goes under that name, can occur in various guises at various stages of society: so that, even in an undeveloped slave society, democracy, for a minority of free men, can coexist with slavery. But in a fully developed slave owners' society, democracy, where not suppressed, seems bound to wither away. In practice it was usually suppressed and, from the point of view of Imperial Rome, for good reason. In the year 110 AD (1,860 years ago) when the Head of the Roman Commonwealth (=*res publica*) or Empire, the *imperator* Trajan, received a suggestion that a voluntary corps for a fire brigade should be built in the capital city of the province in which Pliny was on special mission (Pliny was like the governor twenty years ago of an African Crown Colony communicating with the Colonial Office), the highly experienced Trajan immediately took exception to the idea. He wrote that it is 'societies like these' which had been responsible for 'the political disturbances in your province, particularly in its towns' and then stated conclusively: 'If people assemble for a common purpose, whatever name we give them and for whatever reason, they soon turn into a political club.' (*Letters of the Younger Pliny*, Penguin, 1963).

Democracy in Modern Times

Such was the case in antiquity. But in modern times (the last two centuries) the democratic struggle arises clearly first with the Declaration of Independence 1776 and then in a higher degree in the years of the French revolution after 1789 culminating in 1793 when the Declaration of the Rights of Man became a programme for the next generations. The principles of democracy thus proclaimed were regarded with horror and aversion by the crowned heads of Europe and by their leading statesmen for the first fifty years of the 19th century (and in the case of Queen Victoria up until the anniversary of the French revolution in 1889) so that 'Democracy' was 'a bad word'. But for the common people it was a struggle to extirpate the remaining restrictions of feudalism upon economic, social and political development: and in that struggle 'the labouring classes' also marched under the banner of democracy.

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Democrat and Social-Democrat

Soon the new class arising within capitalism found that application of the principles of democracy had not the content necessary for their needs. Then to the former declarations of principle was added the social content which was expressed in movements both before and after the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848. This was the reason for the adoption throughout Europe in the late 'sixties and just a century ago of the name Social-Democracy and social-democratic parties. The Bolsheviks too had this name. In this country it was the Social-Democratic Federation of 1884, in Germany the Social-Democratic Party, while under the Tsar it was the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. These social-democratic parties were gathered together four score years ago in the Socialist International under the inspiration of Frederick Engels.

Voluntary Associations

In all the countries of Europe the new class developed its own voluntary associations: trade unions, co-operative societies, friendly societies of every description down to funeral benefit clubs and goose clubs. Of all these the most important for the future were the social-democratic parties. After the collapse of the Socialist International in the 1914-18 war, there were splits in every country. Those who had followed the 1912 Basle Congress in its anti-war resolution developed into the various communist parties of Europe. All were voluntary associations and are so still. There was no king or kaiser or president who said it was necessary to have a social-democratic party or 'here are the rules under which it will operate', rules drawn up and supervised 'by a member of my government'. Only in the case of Tsarist Russia did Zubatov, Chief of the Secret Police conceive the idea, precisely seventy years before Mr. Robert Carr—the 'mysterious and magical idea' of organising trade unions whose inspiration and guardian and supervisor would be an official of the government. Gospodin Zubatov himself would act as the type of 'chief registrar' that Robert Carr and Edward Heath propose.

France and Britain

It is 240 years ago since Voltaire, the great French poet and philosopher, after a prolonged visit to England where he could contrast conditions with those of his own country under the iron heel of a despotic monarch is reported to have said that the difference between Frenchmen and Englishmen was that while both were slaves the English, once in five to seven years, could change their

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masters. The edge and point of this remark, fully appreciated in the next hundred years, began to be blunted towards the end of the 19th century when successive extensions of the franchise made democracy seem within reach: and of course it is true that universal suffrage provided a constitutional framework within which the working class could play its part and hope to realise some of its aims.

Trade Unions and Democracy

Meantime, however, amongst advanced thinkers it had begun to be realised that the effective practice of democracy was not limited to a general election at the end of each quinquennium. Above all it was applicable to all the associations built up by the working class. Of these the most obvious were the trade unions. They furnished a field of study seventy and eighty years ago for Beatrice and Sidney Webb to write their *Industrial Democracy* (translated immediately into Russian by Lenin) at the end of last century. In this, together with its preliminary, the *History of Trade Unionism*, they sought to examine the way in which democracy worked in practice both in the daily lives and in the weekly or fortnightly gatherings of trade unionists and trade unionism. It was the application of the principles of democracy from which no union thereafter could depart without damage to itself—and it is precisely sundry departures in this century from these all-embracing principles which have made it possible for the Tories to hope for success in the launching of their attacks. It is for the democracy of the workshop above all, as well as the democracy of branch, district, conference and congress to muster up their strength to resist and defeat a foul conspiracy. In 1793 'it was the glowing ideas of some other struggles of the same nature *not quite so ancient*' that roused Robert Burns to set down words (printed at the opening of these Notes) that were a call to battle. On the outcome of that battle today depends the future of the unions and the political future in Britain.

R. Page Arnot

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As we go to press the UPW strike, which is of such key importance for all workers in the present situation, may mean delay in the dispatch of this issue of *Labour Monthly*. We are confident that our postal subscribers will treat any such delay with understanding.

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TESTING TIME FOR THE TUC

Bernard Panter
President
Manchester District Committee
AUEW (Engineering Section)

ATTLEE'S Labour administration of 1945-51 started it all. The insistence that they could build a 'classless' society based on a 'mixed economy' won support from trade union leaders and employers alike, from politicians from right and left alike—we are now, more than at any time since, reaping the very doubtful fruits of that alien philosophy.

Successive governments have perpetuated the theme often wrapping up distasteful policies, aimed always at strengthening the ruling capitalist class at the expense of the mass of the people, in such a way as to convince large sections of the population that such policies were necessary in order to further develop the 'classless affluent society'. None was more guilty of this than the Wilson administrations of 1964-70.

Vicious attacks on the ordinary people have been made within the first few months of Heath's Tory rule. Massive price increases, the decimation of the social services and health services, all aimed at bringing Britain's economy more in line with those of the European Economic Community, were the first shots in a redeclaration of 'open' class war by the executive council of big business—the Tory Cabinet.

Selling off the more profitable sections of nationalised industries is a further indication that the present government intends to 'soften no blows' in their quest to establish even bigger monopolies, with even bigger profits and certainly with greater control, at the expense of the living standards and working conditions of those who create the wealth—the producers and their families.

Hence their need to shackle and neutralise the only section of society which has the economic strength and the organisation to defeat these Tory plans. Britain's trade unionists, already subject to the same biased laws as every other citizen, are now to have a new set superimposed on them alone in the form of the Industrial Relations Bill 1970.

Sufficient has already been written both in this journal and

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elsewhere (with invaluable analyses being contained in two recent pamphlets* which should be in the hands of every trade unionist) about the clauses, and their effects if this bill is allowed to become law. My main concern here is in how to develop the type of movement, organisation and action which will kill the bill and counter all other Tory attacks.

The movement is crying out for a positive lead from the top. Everyone looks to the General Council of the TUC to call us into action. But, without the kind of activity referred to later, the Knights of the TUC have no intentions of initiating anything which would remotely challenge the capitalist system. Victor Feather, and his right-wing majority, supported by those other exponents of 'democratic socialism', the right-wing leadership of Labour's opposition, are very concerned. Not with the bill nor the other attacks but annoyed that the Tories, with their 'open' class legislation, have upset the equilibrium which had been created by their class collaborationist policies over the last two-and-a-half decades.

Leave it to them (the constitutionalists), they cry. The Labour Party are to fight the bill in the 'House' and then, 'if' the bill becomes law, the TUC will force (?) Carr to the conference table by 'refusing to co-operate' in its implementation. What a load of nonsense! Wilson and Heath will battle it out on the floor of the Commons and while Wilson will be savagely beating his protagonist with a balloon on a stick Mrs. Castle will be knocking Carr's brains out with her 'Feather' pillow. At the end of the day the division bell will ring and, with the Tories' automatic majority, we will just have to 'grin and bear' the outcome. Victor's line is no better. He knows full well that any negotiations he has with Carr would take place on the backcloth of a position of utter weakness if the movement accepts his advice not to participate in direct industrial action against the bill.

The line of some ultras is not helpful either. Advocating the defeatist line that the bill 'will become law' whatever we do they argue that we should be 'starting our collections' now to enable us to pay the fines of those shop stewards who are the first attacked. What kind of revolutionary (?) approach is this which advocates that there should be no retaliation when we are first hit (when the intention to introduce the legislation is stated) but that we should wait until our hands and feet are tied (when the bill becomes law) before we hit back?

* *Carr's Bill and How to Kill It.* Bert Ramelson, *Communist Party*, 24pp., 1s. 6d. (7½p); *The Tory War on the Unions*, O.H. Parsons, *Labour Research Department*, 32pp., 2s. (10p).

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No! This bill must be defeated and quickly. And a hell of a task this is which we set ourselves, but win we must and win we can, if we can mobilise our 10 million trade unionists and win them to show their determination to participate in action and activity of general strike proportions. How can this be done? Can an unofficial body like the Liaison Committee for Defence of Trade Unions achieve such support? The plain answer has to be—No it can't. Such an action, necessary for complete victory, can only result from an official call from the official movement, the TUC, and it is to achieve this latter effect that the efforts of the rank and file must be directed.

The magnificent gathering of nearly 2,000 elected delegates, organised by the Liaison Committee on November 14 last year, set its stall out to achieve the one aim of forcing the Trades Union Congress, and particularly its General Council to do the job it is elected to do—to lead the masses in counter attack against this class legislation and then on to defeating our class enemy. It is important that this role of rank and file bodies should be understood, that at no time has it been the intention to usurp the responsibilities of the TUC or its member unions, but to organise so as to pressurise those bodies into boldly leading us.

Full support for this approach was evidenced in the response of some 700,000 trade unionists who took part in the one day token strike on December 8 answering the clear call of the conference. This action visibly shook Tories and right-wing leaders alike and its success was a clear indication that even the last minute efforts of sabotage by such enemies of militancy like Jim Conway (whose class collaborationist statement was contrary to his union's policy decisions and was later disowned by the AUEW Engineering Section Executive Council) fell on many deaf ears.

Until December 8 the TUC General Council were insisting that their 'day of action' should be restricted to an evening meeting in London's Albert Hall and lunch time meetings in the workshops on January 12 with specific instructions that these must not take place in working hours. The initial action on December 8 forced a change of mind, however slight, with the later acknowledgement that lunch time meetings 'might well extend into the afternoon'.

The powerful mass demonstration seen on January 12 would have been even more successful in respect of the extent of a full day's stoppage had it not been for the confusion created by the general approach of the TUC and the multiplicity of calls from various

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levels of leadership. However, hundreds of thousands more than on December 8 involved themselves in half day stoppages, demonstrations and protest meetings.

We must quickly learn the lesson of January 12. If our aim is to get a single instruction for strike action from the TUC then equally we should be aiming for co-ordinated action and activity by all the rank and file action committees, union district committees, and shop stewards' committees, around a common programme. I would suggest that the Liaison Committee's proposals give a basis for this on a national scale whilst not interfering with the further development of many types of local activities.

Many thousands of trade unionists are not yet convinced of the need to oppose this bill; many do not understand it, whilst it is equally true that hundreds of thousands of the 'general public' have been influenced by the unprecedented Tory propaganda campaign. Our immediate duty therefore is to mount a massive exercise of explanation, aimed at winning the conviction of trade unionists of the need to fight when the call is made, and to win the 'general public' for their active support.

The next major landmark is the recall of the TUC on March 18 and, whilst every encouragement must be given for the maximum involvement in all the other activity, we must aim for a really national 'day of action' on that day, with stoppages and demonstrations in all localities, and a focal point being the biggest and most representative lobby ever of the TUC meeting at Fairfield Halls, Croydon. Massive support will ensure that the TUC recall will be forced to discuss active opposition to the bill and not, as Victor Feather would like, a tactical discussion of how to manipulate it when it becomes law.

To plan the next steps there is to be a recall of the November 14 Liaison Committee conference (on April 3, in London), immediately following the TUC recall. We must ensure that this conference is even more representative than the last.

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COLLISION COURSE IN AFRICA

William J. Pomeroy

IT has been more than a decade since Harold Macmillan's 'winds of change' speech, delivered in South Africa, set a certain tone of adjustment by the imperialist powers to the independence storm sweeping over the African continent. Not many years were to elapse, however, before the nature of that adjustment became plain: it screened efforts toward the neo-colonial retention of all the key features of continued economic domination and toward the keeping open of traditional avenues of imperialist investment and trade.

Independence for 41 African countries in no way implied a retreat by imperialism from Africa. In virtually all cases political independence was not complemented by the essential ingredient of economic independence. The big western banks, mining companies, plantations, oil corporations and trading interests preserved their positions unaltered and uncurtailed. Wherever local leaders undertook steps toward independent economic development, as in Ghana, coups, plots and direct western intervention occurred to restore the neo-colonial pattern.

Furthermore, the winds of change were not permitted to blow over the whole of Africa. Since 1965 a gun-mounted wind-break has been erected along the Zambesi, to preserve a white-supremacy fortress for imperialist investment in southern Africa. Backed by Nato and made in particular a keystone of present British Tory policy, the southern Africa base strategy is emerging as a threat to all forms of independence on the continent.

There are significant reasons for this latter development. In recent years new trends and factors have entered the picture. A new wave of independence and liberation has spread across Africa from north to south, while fresh problems and contradictions have arisen for the imperialist countries, impelling them toward more aggressive policies. In the clash of these opposing forces, Africa promises to be a major arena of struggle in the 1970s.

One of the chief motivations of present imperialist policy in Africa can be detected in the speech delivered at the annual general meeting in London on December 15, 1970, of the Overseas Mining Association by its outgoing president, Mr. Beville Pain. Declaring that 'the consumption of minerals and metals throughout the world is increasing at a fast pace,' he warned that this 'is likely to continue

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to a point where it could outrun supplies of some important raw materials unless new sources continue to be discovered and opened up. . . . A *secure* supply of raw materials is essential for industry.'

This was not all that bothered Mr. Pain, who went on to say that 'Other major consuming countries, in particular Japan and West Germany, are now participating actively in the search for new minerals and are establishing long-term pre-emptive contracts through investment in new mineral projects, particularly in Australia, South America and Africa, thereby *securing control over future supplies.*'

Two months earlier, in October 1970, an almost identical warning was made in New York by Mr. Ian MacGregor, chairman of the big US international mining corporation, American Metals Climax, which, like such huge British mining corporations as Rio Tinto-Zinc and Lonrho, has extensive and spreading investments in African countries. In alarmist tones MacGregor pictured a critical shortage of metals in the US in the coming decades, saying that the US 'will never again be self-sufficient in most of the metals it requires, indicating continued and *increasing dependence on foreign sources.*' He called for increased government assistance to aid overseas mining ventures.

A renewed scramble for the riches of Africa in particular is voiced in these utterances of imperialist need and greed. It is marked by intensifying imperialist rivalry on the one hand, and by hardening opposition to African independence and liberation on the other. These have figured in a number of episodes in Africa in the recent past. In Nigeria the tragic 'Biafra secession' was linked with a clash of western oil interests. The Republic of Guinea, where American and West German hands were visible in the iron glove of Portuguese invasion, happens not surprisingly to be the location of one-fourth of the world's assured deposits of bauxite. Behind the riddled screen of UN sanctions in Rhodesia a fight for advantage has occurred, with Japan and West Germany, not covered by the UN decrees, moving in to undermine Britain's position; 1971 began with the defiant sanction-breaking US shipment of chrome ore from its Union Carbide mines.

Most conspicuous feature of the imperialist drive for plunder is the American penetration challenge. In 1960 American private direct investment in Africa was but $975 million; by 1968 this had jumped to $2,700 million and has now passed the $3,000 million mark. US investment earnings taken out of Africa were only $33 million in 1960, but were $671 million in 1968, with the rate of

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profit reaching a fantastic 25.1 per cent in 1968. The first-ever US policy document on Africa, issued in March 1970 (*The US and Africa in the 70s*), put emphasis on private investment instead of government 'aid' and declared opposition to African liberation movements.

A third leg of the US policy declaration was opposition to the 'tied' aid and preferential trade agreements that are part of the neo-colonial pattern of the old entrenched colonial powers, through which the US wishes to break, a stand reiterated in the strong American protest of January 1971 against EEC preferential agreements that will encompass most of Africa.

The power of the American drive was evidenced in September 1970 when a consortium headed by a US Standard Oil subsidiary (Amoco Minerals) won a major mineral concession in the Congo, against the bid of the Belgian Union Minière that was once the Congo overlord. President Mobutu said he had been assured of $1,000 million of American investments over the next five years, which, in a single area, would boost the total US stake in Africa by one-third. Not surprisingly the report coincided with an opinion by analysts that the Congo was being groomed as a right-wing 'balance' to anti-colonial African governments.

It is not difficult to conclude that the 'national interests' of Britain used to justify Mr. Heath's desperate arms for South Africa policy are seen to be threatened as much by the doubling of the American share in foreign investments in South Africa in the past decade and by the usurpation of a $100 million annual arms sale to the apartheid regime by France as by African liberation movements and non-existent Red Fleets in the Indian Ocean.

Whether through consortiums or the ruthless competition of rival corporations, the effects of grasping imperialism have weighed heaviest on independent Africa. (The total US investment on the continent of $1,700 million in 1960-68 was outweighed by the total US profit taken out of Africa of $2,800 million in the same period.) The new imperialist offensive has coincided, therefore, with a mounting and determined effort by African countries to achieve their economic independence, and to halt the drain on their development means.

As concluded by Prof. Reginald Green in his contribution to the important collection of studies contained in the recently published *African Perspectives**, 'the quest for economic independence is a

* *African Perspectives*, edited by Christopher Allen and R. W. Johnson. *Cambridge University Press*, 438 pp., £5 5s. (£5.25).

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necessary part of the creation of national institutions and structures capable of generating sustained development.' In the past year or so this quest has spread across Africa like a crusade. Nationalisation measures ranging from moderate to sweeping have been enacted in Zambia, Libya, Sudan, Somalia, Uganda, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Algeria, Kenya and elsewhere.

'In the Sudan it came as a great shock when on May 24, 1970, President Nimeiry announced the immediate nationalisation of all foreign banks,' reads the annual report of Barclays Bank DCO. Imperialist corporations claim that some degree of nationalisation was expected, but not its extent and its step by step progression to more complete independence, as in Libya, where the foreign oil companies, compelled bit by bit to yield up more of their profits, see the handwriting of full nationalisation on the wall.

Zambia began with taking over 25 leading foreign-owned companies in 1968. It was a prelude to the 51 per cent control over the copper industry taken in 1969. In November 1970 this was extended to all foreign banks, insurance companies, building societies and others.

Wrote the *Times Business News* on May 27, 1970: 'The worrying aspect of the recent measures is that they appear to have been undertaken to placate internal demand for greater economic independence.' In Uganda, which assumed 60 per cent control of 83 foreign corporations in that month, President Obote had previously announced support for a 'Common Man's Charter' aimed at overcoming feudalism and moving 'away from individual and private enrichment'.

Foreign banks, one of the main targets in many countries, were accused of failing to recruit or to develop Africans on their staffs, with not opening new branches to serve development needs, and with restricting or denying credit to Africans. Banking institutions, as under Zambia's new Findeco agency, are to be harnessed to serve national development and not foreign investment operations.

Nigeria, announcing a £1,800 million four-year development plan in November 1970, shocked foreign interests by declaring a 'public sector control of strategic industries' and taking a 55 per cent share in oil, steel, petrochemical and other key industries. Asserted was 'control of the repatriation of dividends and capital and encouragement of their investment within Nigeria', and the 'Nigerianisation of ownership and management at all levels'.

It is glaringly obvious that these trends of imperialism and of the African peoples are in conflict and must increasingly collide.

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It is equally apparent that imperialism intends to resort to every direct and indirect means to retain its neo-colonial grip. In Zambia, the architect of the nationalisation programme, Andrew Sardanis, who had been appointed in May 1970 to head the overall government Mining and Industrial Development Corporation, was bought off in December by the British Lonrho group, resigning to head a Lonrho subsidiary, African Industrial and Finance Corporation. The painfully small number of African technical personnel is one of the drawbacks to development, and their absorption by imperialist firms is deliberate. Related the Barclays report cited above: 'In the case of one country 80 per cent of those sent abroad on fellowships paid for by the UN disappeared either into the private sector or into the developed world.'

Furthermore, nationalisation measures or the adoption of non-capitalist methods of development are not in themselves a guarantee of decisive progress, as the tragic example of Ghana has proved. To move forward to complete freedom from imperialist control and to the socialism that many African leaders profess to advocate, a conscious revolutionary force must exist in a leading role.

Fortunately, this trend, too, has begun to emerge in Africa. In the Sudan and in Algeria the issue of an independent Marxist-Leninist core for the revolutionary front is being fought out. The Socialist Workers' and Farmers' Party is struggling to play a vanguard role in Nigeria. One of its leaders, Tunji Otegbeye, has recently called for the recreation of a force like the All-Africa Peoples' Conference that disappeared when the Organisation of African Unity came on the scene, an OAU in which neo-colonial elements have hamstrung the policies and committees for liberation of all Africa that have been formally adopted. As Otegbeye has said:

> ... today Africa needs a new organisation for summarising the revolutionary experiences of the people and working out a concerted programme for the total liberation of our continent from colonialism and neo-colonialism. Such a struggle against neo-colonialism is part and parcel of the struggle for economic independence, for the choice of the non-capitalist road. Such a struggle must by its content have a core of the working class-peasant alliance and the progressive intellectuals. Such a front heralding a new trend to a socialist future must have the Marxist-Leninist vanguard in order to ensure correct tactics and the success of the revolution.

There is no doubt that one of the main reasons for the increasing Nato backing of Portugal's colonial wars in Angola, Mozambique and Guiné Bissau is fear of the type of liberation movement that has been forged in these struggles. Men like Amilcar Cabral of

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the PAIGC, Aghostino Neto of the MPLA, and Marcellino Dos Santos of the FRELIMO are quite different from most of the African leaders and their organisations to whom independence was granted early in the 1960s. Their victories will go far toward bringing to the fore genuinely revolutionary and dynamic forces in Africa.

Imperialism, of course, has driven itself into having to confront such a reality by its stubborn resistance to freedom in southern Africa, just as its present compulsions toward the exploitation of independent Africa are creating the trends and forces to throw off its control.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

Tony McNally
National Organiser
Young Communist League

YOUNG people, including students, have traditionally played an active part in many progressive and revolutionary actions this century, this being particularly true of Russia in 1917, China in 1949, of Germany, Italy and France before and since the war, going back to Marx and his time as a student in Germany. President Allende after his election spoke of the victory in Chile as being above all a youth revolution. The anti-fascist movement in Spain, particularly the illegal workers' commissions, not to mention the Basque Nationalists and Communist Party, are almost synonymous with youth. Vietnam above all else has inspired possibly one of the widest world movements of students and young people ever known.

It must, unfortunately, be recognised that in Britain, apart from the 1930s with the anti-fascist movement, and a century earlier the Chartists, the organised trade union and labour movement has been weak in its appeal to its own younger generations, leaving them directly to the influence of their enemies in the ruling class. Individuals, such as Robert Owen, William Morris and Blatchford, in their own way recognised this and attempted to alter the position. It is no coincidence that it is the British trade union and labour movement, dominated by a century or more of right-wing politics and leadership, that has shied away from, and discouraged the active involvement or appeal to, young workers and students.

Central to the fight for a change to socialism will be the organised

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strength of the trade union and labour movement, changed itself decisively to the left in policy and leadership, acting as the main force in a far wider anti-monopoly alliance embracing all working people, small business men, youth and students.

With some 6,000,000 young people between 18-24 years of age eligible to vote, more than ever before the labour movement has to approach this section as a powerful potential ally, seeing them as a political force to be won.

Patronising gestures are totally inadequate as instanced with the TUC initiating an annual Youth Award consisting of a trophy to put upon the mantlepiece. But the reality is that the vast majority of young people at school, work or in higher education do not look to the labour movement to assist them to defend and extend their interests.

In the last election with Labour receiving 12,141,676 votes and the Tories 13,106,965—that being the lowest poll since 1945, in spite of there being an additional six million young people eligible to vote (though some two million were not registered)—it meant that young people could have played a decisive political role in the outcome. In the main, however, they did not use their vote, being unable to identify their particular experience of life and problems with the action of the political parties of the working class. This position must be faced as a political challenge of the first order by trade unionists, co-operators, Labour and Communists. There is no future for young people with the Tories, the establishment; what has appeared to be their spontaneous reaction is to 'do your own thing', turn your back on society in the hope that it will go away.

Facing up to this is one of the great challenges of the movement, at a time when the reward of victory will guarantee a future to the working class movement and ensure more speedily the establishment of socialism in Britain. This must be faced from two complementary angles: one of how to bring young people into action on their own behalf, and secondly how the trade union and labour movement can champion their interests using the weight of organised strength for this end.

Over the last period we have seen young people come into action, culminating in a demonstration of 100,000 in October 1968 for Victory to the Vietnamese People. There were the actions to stop the South African Springbok tour and against arms to the Apartheid state. Immediate issues affect young people at schools, where they have begun to organise into various unions or associations pressing for

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democracy in secondary education. Alongside several small organisations, such as the Schools Action Union (mainly London based) and the Cardiff Union of School Students, there is the ten thousand strong National Union of Students scholars' associate scheme; there is a growing body of opinion in favour of transforming this into an autonomous and democratic scholars' organisation. One of the central demands common to all is the fight for non-selective comprehensive education, which corresponds to the demands of the National Union of Teachers and the TUC.

Following on the decisions of the Junior Workers' Conference of the Engineering union in March, 1970, some 350 young trade union delegates were elected, representing, through their organisations, over 1,000,000 trade unionists, to lobby the 1970 TUC in Brighton. They called for a TUC Youth Conference to examine the particular issues of concern to young people, especially those at work, and to examine ways of attracting more young people into the trade union movement, particularly the three million currently unorganised youth at work.

A conference on February 7 in Manchester will mark a further step towards building a movement amongst young workers to win them for trade union organisations and will strengthen their ability to act on their own initiative on key issues affecting young people at work.

On the wider social, cultural and recreational interests of young people there has tended to develop, though somewhat obscurely, a feeling for a new concept of community interests. This reflects itself in a tendency to participate in events of a social nature, a move towards greater opportunities of self expression in culture and a tendency of decline in the more orthodox clubs and church activity for young people. This was observed in the Government's latest report on *Youth and the Community in 1970* which contains a wide spectrum of progressive demands in relation to the Youth Service. Significantly this report was contributed to by the trade union movement, and at the 1970 TUC the General Council's favourable observations were endorsed. However, though the report has been widely acclaimed, the present Government has not chosen to do anything about it and no initiative has come from the Ministry of Education and Science who would take initial responsibility.

Recently a new political force can be seen with the initiative of the Women's Liberation groups, mainly consisting of younger women and girls demanding full emancipation, equal rights and opportunities. Some will label them middle class, but they are an

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expression of a new fighting mood amongst women where the reality of life to them is that they are getting a raw deal all round; no one has come to their aid, so they must take the initiative themselves. As they come to play a more important part in the economy, resulting in a change of status and social needs, old customs will have to go and no longer will the younger woman with a better education tolerate playing a purely domestic role in the home or working for pin money in factories and offices.

The organised trade union and labour movement, if it is to make any appeal to young people and draw them closer to the movement, must give attention to backing these movements and initiatives of young people in a way that will strengthen their organisations and make advances upon the concrete demands that they are fighting for. Such is the powerful capacity, skill and organisation of the working class movement that once it understands clearly why it should, and how it can, help, there can be little doubt that the forces of progress, democracy and socialism will be considerably strengthened by a powerful mass movement of young people and students alongside and closely linked to the organised trade union and labour movement.

BOOK THIS DATE

A *Labour Monthly* **Golden Jubilee** Celebration Committee has been formed with A. F. Papworth as Honorary Secretary.

A **Golden Jubilee Reception** with buffet

will be held on **Wednesday, June 16,** at **7 p.m.,**

at the **Ivanhoe Hotel, Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C.1.**

An Exhibition illustrating the record of these fifty fighting years will be shown at the Reception.

Notable personalities, friends and supporters of *Labour Monthly* will be present.

A fuller announcement will be made in the March issue of *Labour Monthly.*

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STUDENTS AND THE TRADE UNIONS

David Wynn*
Vice-President
National Union of Students

AT its recent National Conference the National Union of Students took several decisions of fundamental importance with regard to its relationship with the trade union movement. It condemned the Tory Government's Industrial Relations Bill and gave clear and unequivocal support to those taking industrial action on December 8 in opposition to the bill. The question of the Union's relationship with the trade union movement provided one of the major debates of the Conference. The result was a policy which clearly states the desirability and importance of establishing a closer relationship with the trade union movement, a declaration in favour in principle of NUS affiliating to the TUC and the establishment of a Commission, composed of Executive members and Conference delegates, to investigate the practical implications of affiliation.

The importance of these decisions should not be underestimated; they represent a substantial victory for those who have been campaigning on this issue for some years and are the result of a long, hard struggle within the Union. They establish clearly that students are now aware that in any political conflict their place is alongside the organised labour movement. And this is no mean achievement. Students' blacklegging activities in the 1926 general strike are only the most celebrated case of student opposition to working class militant action, and many others are of more recent origin. It is really only in the last few years that the mood and nature of student activity has changed significantly as students have taken action in attempts to change their own college and in doing so have developed a greater affinity with trade unions and other working class organisations. Even today there is a substantial number of students whose basic sympathies lie with their 1926 colleagues. It should not be forgotten that the largest student political organisation is the Federation of Conservative Students.

The realisation of the need for closer links with the trade union movement is also an indication of a certain degree of political maturity in the student movement. The view that students are a new revolutionary force has had considerable currency in recent

* Here writing in his personal capacity.

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years, and has been given great prominence by the media, with the clear intention of isolating the student movement and denigrating the achievements and successes of working class militancy. It is to the credit of the student movement, given the very powerful forces operating upon it, that it has rejected this view and has recognised the essential role of the working class and the labour movement in any revolutionary change in society.

Contacts between students and trade unionists have developed slowly and spasmodically in recent years. A number of student unions and local student organisations have some sort of association, usually either membership or observer status, with trades councils. Contact has been made with apprentices and young worker organisations, and NUS has supported the forthcoming TUC Youth Conference. The NUS has had greater contact in recent years, albeit on an informal basis, with the TUC and trade unions at a national level. For instance the TUC wrote to the previous Labour Government last summer in support of the NUS grants claim. It has now become commonplace for trade unionists, particularly those involved in militant struggle, to speak at student meetings, though the reverse occurs less frequently.

The development of such links, however, is most spectacularly illustrated by the support students and trade unionists have given each other when involved in a strike, sit-in, demonstration or some similar action. Students have given money to various strike committees and on occasions have also joined picket lines and demonstrations. The way in which this can work at a local level is well illustrated by student involvement in the Roberts-Arundel dispute at Stockport three years ago. The most important development in this connection came, however, with NUS for the action on December 8 and the large number of students who themselves took action on that day. A sizeable number of student unions officially boycotted all teaching on that day; many more held teach-ins and meetings on the Industrial Relations Bill and several thousands of students joined the marches and demonstrations throughout the country. Nor have trade unionists been slow to support students when in dispute with their college authorities. The issue of confidential files which generated so much activity in colleges last year brought an immediate response from industrial militants, themselves so well aware of the existence and vicious effects of black lists. The sit-ins at Warwick and Manchester Universities last year received substantial and well-publicised support from the labour movement, and at Warwick this was given added significance by the revelations of the involve-

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ment of large industrial concerns in the running of the University.

The situation should not, however, be over-stated for there are many obstacles to be overcome before there is a full and sustained relationship between students and the trade union movement. Many trade unionists are still hostile towards students, regarding them as a lazy, privileged élite constituting an unwelcome and unnecessary burden on the tax-payer. Even trade union militants are at times suspicious, often rightly so, of many student actions. Similarly many student militants are frustrated by what appears to be a reluctance of many trade unionists, even those with a left-wing and militant reputation, to engage in political issues outside the run of most trade union activity, e.g. international issues such as Vietnam and South Africa. That even militants in both areas can be hostile, suspicious or confused by the actions of other militants indicates the scope and complexity of the problem. A strong and effective relationship between students and the trade union movement will not emerge over night but will require the time, sympathy and understanding of both sides.

The need is for students and trade unionists to join together in order to achieve educational, economic and political change in our society but the precise relationship between them has not yet been worked out. At long last attempts are being made to tackle this question (e.g. the NUS trade union commission) but even so all too often a direct parallel is simplistically drawn between student unions and trade unions. The result is that many peculiar characteristics of the student movement are ignored and a pattern of work artificially imposed upon it.

If NUS is seen as a trade union then it is a trade union of a different and particular type. Its 'trade union aspirations' are related to the growth of trade unionism among so-called white-collar workers, but they are not really a part of it. The rapid change-over of membership, its automatic character and the loose national structure gives NUS a rather different position. Nevertheless, whatever the precise nature of the relationship between students and trade unionists, students have now publicly recognised the need to work more closely with the labour movement in order to secure change in our society, and recent events augur well for future developments.

Full time students will be interested in the special concession on LM subscription rates. See inside back cover for details and subscription form.

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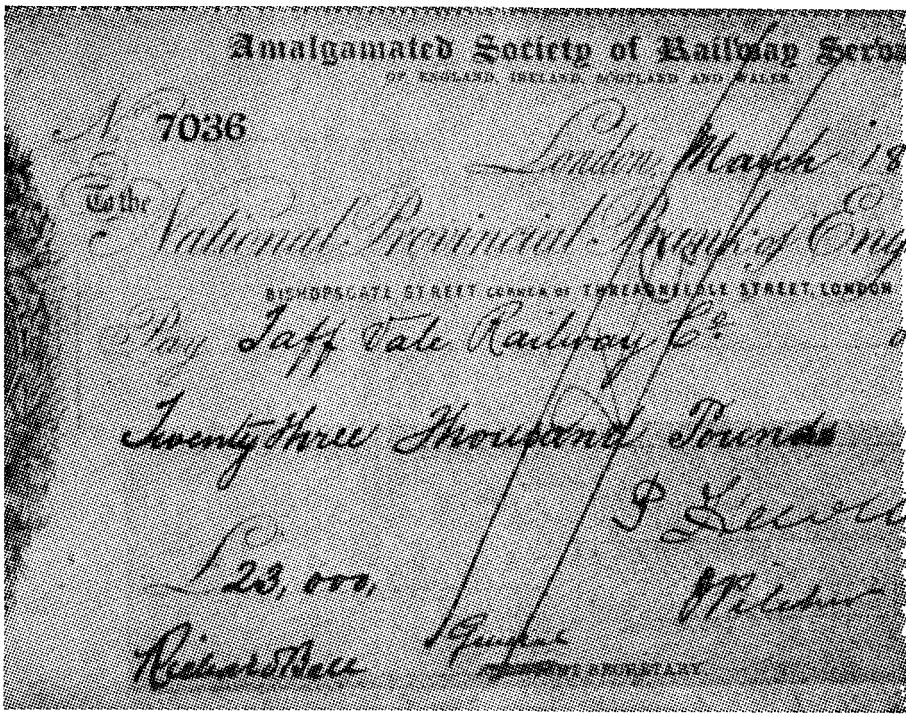
WHAT WAS THE TAF

The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, founded and registered a
the first step in the calling together, by the Trades Union Congress, of
February 1900. In August 1900 a strike began on the Taff Vale Railway. T
when the railway company brought in blacklegs from a strike breaking ('fre
Committee of the ASRS.

The directors of the Taff Vale Railway Company had connections with
('to provide a legal framework') and so they launched a legal action which
Union Acts), would cripple the Society. The action was successful. On Ju
with the result that the ASRS had to pay out a cheque for £23,000 in dama
to £42,000—whose equivalent today might be set at nearly £500,000.

It was in the midst of the South African war (for goldfields and diamon
was the main route for the Welsh steam coal, then the sole fuel of the Na
Colony and Natal.

On this judgement, the Webbs, in their *Industrial Democracy* (1902 edit
'The real grievance of the trade unions, and the serious danger to thei
law, and its liability to be used as a means of oppression. This danger is
strikes which nearly all judges and juries share with the rest of



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VALE JUDGEMENT?

y ago (in the same year as the first Trade Union Act of 1871), had taken Conference to form the Labour Representation Committee. This was in ike for two shillings a week more wages was unofficial to begin with, but ur') organisation the strikers received financial backing from the Executive

ɔuping of big capitalists who had plans at that time to curb trade unions ıccessful (in spite of what had seemed the express provisions of the Trade 1901, the House of Lords uttered its decision in favour of the employers, /hilst legal and other costs brought the total bill to be paid by the Society

ıes in the Transvaal and Orange River States), and the Taff Vale Railway l also of the great steamship lines carrying British Empire troops to Cape

ımade this comment:
ıinued usefulness and improvement, lies in the uncertainty of the English ·ased, and the grievance aggravated, by the dislike of trade unionism and pper and middle classes.'

The result? Trade unions in self defence rapidly affiliated themselves to the Labour Representation Committee (afterwards the Labour Party) which won 29 parliamentary seats in 1906, and in December 1906 secured the Trade Disputes Act, the palladium of British trade unions. Thereupon the Labour Party was attacked and deprived of its trade union funds by the Osborne Judgement of 1909 in the House of Lords. Trade unions and strikes in the First World War were 'curbed' by the Munitions of War Act: and within two years thereafter by the Emergency Powers Act of 1920. The Trade Disputes Act of 1906 had its teeth drawn by the Tory Government's amending act of 1927 which lasted for nearly 20 years—until repealed by parliament after the Second World War.

Since 1946 the Trade Disputes Act has once more come into full force—though strikers in practice have been harassed not only by various legal judgements but by the Emergency Powers Act—under which proclamation was made in the dock strike of July 1970.

Part of Mr. Carr's capitalist plan is to go back to Taff Vale, i.e. to clamp down on the right to strike.

R.P.A.

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Crisis of Nationalised Industries

(Continuing the survey begun in our issue of December 1970 with contributions on Transport, we welcome in this issue an article by Jack Dunn—Ed. *LM)*

COAL INDUSTRY—TORY ATTACK

Jack Dunn
General Secretary
National Union of Mineworkers (Kent Area)

THE Tory Government has initiated its threatened assault on nationalised industries—an assault, unless successfully rebutted, that will certainly inflict very serious damage on these industries and affect wages and working conditions of those employed in them. This attack was foreshadowed in the Tory election manifesto and is a subject on which many ministerial speeches have made clear that they would 'progressively reduce the involvement of the state in the nationalised industries. . . .'

The strategy will assume various forms but inevitably the basic objective will be to cream off profitable sectional activities as well as to preclude state industry from specified operations. Quite clearly, for a party whose political philosophy rests on private enterprise—profits and privilege—they are not only concerned about the growth of state industry and its incursions into the 'holy environs' as a major factor in the national economy. They are concerned too that, although nationalisation has operated functionally as an arm of 'state capitalism', to them it represents ideological dangers. I think it would be a serious error to underestimate the total objectives of the Tories—for example, there has been (albeit slowly) growing interest and demand in the labour movement for industrial democracy in our society, for an increasing share in various forms of participation in the controls of industry and, whatever criticisms may be levelled, certainly it is mainly in the nationalised industries that even minimal opportunities to assume a little power and influence have been obtained.

The Tories regard nationalisation and industrial democracy as anathema and, if their efforts succeed in 'proving' that nationalisation cannot compete commercially with private enterprise, quite ob-

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viously a lot of damage will be inflicted on the 'image' of nationalisation. Quite clearly, the Tories' oft avowed favour of competition is a complete confidence trick and was clearly exampled in their support for a privately owned 'second force' airline together with a compulsory transfer of BOAC routes valued at £6 million.

The history of Britain's nationalised coal industry is rich in detail of how state capitalism is intended to operate. At the time of nationalisation, when the assets of the private owners were transferred to the National Coal Board, well over a thousand mines—shaft, drift and opencast—were purchased as 'a going concern' even though many were exhausted of reserves; the majority of the others were in a relatively decadent condition due to lack of investment over many years and of course the former coal owners were notorious for what they took out of the industry. Included in the assets too were 85 brick and other undertakings, many coke ovens and other works. The allegation that the NCB was set up to mine coal only is cant and utter rubbish, and I do not recall any objections to the former coal owners about so-called diversification of operations. The industry, used by the Government and private industry as a 'milch cow' for its first 10-11 years, has suffered many problems thereby. From 1947-57, a period of fuel scarcity and therefore a 'seller's market', succeeding governments prevailed upon Miners' Union leaders and the NCB to make British coal available to British industry at a price of about 30s. a ton below west European prices (shades of competition and commercialism). The mining industry subsidised other industry in Britain which was able to capitalise and make tremendous profits out of comparatively cheap coal for many years. The situation changed dramatically in 1958 when, for the first time for many years, fuel supply outweighed demand and we had a Tory government telling the coal industry that the past policy was ended—'You survive now on your ability to compete.'

The coal industry, *thus denied* the commercial practice of accumulation of reserves for investment and indeed denied the possibility of self-financing on a large scale, was charged with the job of rehabilitating and modernising an ailing industry, much of which was beyond saving. The industry, thus deprived of essential financial reserves which redounded to the advantage of private British industry, had therefore to borrow money on a large scale, and of course this, in terms of interest payments, depreciation, etc., has resulted in higher coal prices, resistance to improved wages and conditions to mineworkers and above all the tremendous body

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blows of pit closures, redundancies, unemployment, transfers and many other social consequences and problems. Ironically, many of the pit closures in recent years were due to collieries being so-called 'uneconomic'.

There are many parallels between railways and coal in some of these aspects of nationalisation policy, and obviously such is the 'class' attitude of the Tories that they will use any weapon to disable or dismember nationalisation, or to bring it into disrepute. Quite clearly too, the Tory Government is going to pay the pipers who subscribed to their election funds, and how better than to make available well established and lucrative so-called ancillary activities of nationalised industry.

The Coal Industry Bill was given a second reading on November 3, 1970, and it is Clause 7 of the bill which gives the Government power to order the NCB to *discontinue* or *restrict* any of its non-colliery activities and to *sell off all or any* part of any of these ancillary undertakings. The Government's attack could therefore be directed to (a) declaring that certain activities are not central to the NCB's field of operations (producing coal) or (b) simply impound (with 'proper' compensation of course) profitable sections of operations.

Large scale propaganda is helping to pave the way by conditioning public opinion to the belief that nationalised industry is meddling in private affairs, that nationalised industry is diversifying into industrial undertakings contrary to their powers. These allegations to a large extent are a smoke screen to hide the doctrinaire aims and policies of a reactionary government which is assailing the British people on every front.

In any event the allegation is a confidence trick—the Tories have never complained about private companies extending their activities. The sale of chemicals represents 13 per cent of Shell's total sales and in their 1970 investment programme they declared intentions to double chemicals output; what goes for Shell goes also for British Petroleum and almost any other large company one cares to examine.

To some extent, the NCB has diversified, and in some cases it has been compelled to do so simply because of economic, market and environmental factors, but largely the NCB's ancillary activities have been in fields that were inherited from the former coal owners or which are related in one way or another to the mining or processing of coal. Its extensive coke ovens and processed

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fuel plants use coal as the basic raw material; tar and bensole, which are by-products of the manufacture of coke and capable of use for chemicals, are basic elements in the Board's expanding interests in the chemicals industry. Again, the NCB inherited substantial brick making undertakings from the former coal owners; these have been expanded for many reasons: in some cases by-products of coal operations are used in brick making and the Board, seeking a satisfactory guaranteed coal use, has ventured into central (coal) heating and building materials activities.

The NCB too has acquired special knowledge of under-water geology, particularly in connection with under-sea coal mining in the North East, and, one presumes in view of its expertise, it was given the authority and power by a Labour Government in 1966 to join in exploration for North Sea gas. In partnership with Continental Oil, it has discovered the Viking Field, which is likely to be in production in late 1972. Apparently, the Tories prefer the intervention of American big business in North Sea gas to British public ownership. Ted Heath, in a speech to the Tory conference on October 11, 1970, and in other speeches, said that he wants to create a society in which people are free to make their own decisions and responsible for the consequences of their mistakes, without continual interference from the Government.

The Tory Party's 1968 election programme, *Make Life Better*, declared that a Tory government would let the management of nationalised industries get on with the job and would stop messing them about with damaging political pressures and detailed interference by government departments. These promises have been abandoned—some of us are promised shackles instead of freedom. Like Heath's promise of 'one nation', we are sharply reminded that there are *two nations*. This Government is legislating the most vicious class measures this country has witnessed for many years—there is a correlation in their doctrinaire attacks whether the recipient is an old age pensioner, schoolchild, wage earner, the sick, a householder, a trade unionist or the nationalised industries. These attacks must be resisted; they can only be defeated by all-out resistance.

The miners must take their rightful place at the head of the movement that will surely rid Britain of this Tory Government and its class policies of 'succour the rich and savage the poor'. We must also ensure next time a socialist policy for Britain. This is the only solution.

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Kremlinologists Exposed (1)

SOCIALIST AGRICULTURE

Andrew Rothstein

A mucky tide of anti-Soviet propaganda has in recent months burst from the Fleet Street and Whitehall sewers, depositing an evil-smelling sludge of slander and hysteria. No ingredient is more ancient and fishlike than the stories about agricultural disaster and peasant misery in the Soviet Union: moreover, the modern technique is to slip them into some other topic, as though they are self-evident.

Thus the *Daily Telegraph* (November 3), in an editorial encouraging President Nixon not to make too many concessions in the missile talks at Helsinki, says the Russian people would pay an unthinkable price for an arms race: 'severe food shortages, even at festival times, have been their accustomed lot for years.' Or the *Economist* (December 19), commenting on events in Poland, says bad harvests have played havoc with agriculture there, and imports from Russia probably won't improve the situation: 'Anyway, Russia faces a similar problem in its own agriculture.'

Or again, for many years now anti-Soviet propagandists have taken the cue from Edward Crankshaw's announcement, in a Penguin published in 1959, that in the USSR 'the peasants still form a vast dark mass, distorting the whole economy . . . Far from the cities, far from any main road or any railway, millions still exist in a world virtually untouched by the material progress of the twentieth century.' One of his latest disciples (in this respect) writes that 'for the outside world, and even for urban Russians, the countryside is the great unknown' (Mervyn Jones in *Tribune*, October 23). But Mr. Jones knows—and this is his report:

> Collective farmers earn very low wages; work unlimited, arbitrarily ordered hours; have no trade unions, even the Soviet kind; are outside the scope of social services, and have no right to the 'labour book' which in the Soviet Union is necessary for seeking employment, so that they cannot leave the farms.

Terrifying, indeed—and bogus from beginning to end!

Take the position of agriculture as a whole. Here is an eloquent table of *average annual output*, in millions of tons, within present Soviet territory:

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	Grain	*Sugarbeet*	*Potatoes*	*Vegetables*	*Meat*	*Milk*	*Eggs*†
1909-13	72.5	10.1	30.6	5.5*	4.8	28.8	11.2
1966-69	162.8	81.7	94.3	19.0	11.4	79.9	34.6

*1913 †1000m.

And the 1970 harvest has already been stated to be the biggest in history!

Note that the population has gone up roughly by 50 per cent over the same period—from 159 millions to 242 millions—while output has doubled, trebled or increased even more. Of course the peasants and workers are eating far more than in Tsarist days, as health statistics of all kinds show, festivals or no festivals: and occasional disproportions revealed in planned production and distribution cannot change that tremendous fact.

Take the position of the peasantry themselves—or more precisely, the $17\frac{1}{4}$ million collective farmers. The false witnesses usually choose to ignore the simple fact that a high proportion of agricultural output is now produced by the $8\frac{3}{4}$ million workers (in 1969) on the state farms, who are not peasants at all, but wage-earners and trade unionists. In 1969 they produced 43 per cent of Soviet grain, 35 per cent of vegetables, 31 per cent of meat and eggs, 27 per cent of milk.

So let us consider the 'darkness' of the collective farmers.

'Untouched by the material progress of the twentieth century'? In 1969, 99 per cent of all collective farms used electricity, and 94 per cent of all collective farmers had it laid on in their homes (*Central Statistical Department* year book, 1969). In the collective farms, the same year, grain sowing and harvesting was 100 per cent mechanised (the same applied to sugarbeet and cotton), potato sowing 90 per cent and gathering 73 per cent, haymaking 77 per cent and rick-making 71 per cent, milking 41 per cent, sheepshearing 80 per cent (the same authority).

A good deal to do yet—but hardly 'untouched'.

Then what about the dark mass itself? Here are December 1969 figures:

330 out of every 1,000 collective farmers have had a higher, secondary or further education (in 1939 the figure was 18 per 1,000). There were 115,000 clubs and palaces of culture in the countryside—17,700 of them built by the collective farms, i.e. by half the total number of collective farms, the others by local authorities. There were 123,500 country cinemas (and the number is growing). There were over 72,000 collective farm and other rural public libraries. Over

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85 per cent of all co-operative retail trade is done in the countryside —and many hundreds of thousands of collective farmers are elected members of shop and district management committees, or volunteer 'inspectors' of co-operative shops, bakeries, processing factories, etc. There were 600,000 collective farmers elected to the rural Soviets at the March, 1969, elections: are they, too, a 'dark mass'?

Now for Mr. Jones's nightmares.

'Very low wages': strictly speaking, collective farmers don't earn wages at all, being self-employed, but their guaranteed monthly remuneration has been based (since 1966) on the wage-scales for similar work in state farms and in most cases has caught up with them. Moreover, they receive an important supplement to cash wages in the shape of produce, after the harvest, in proportion to their work done.

And there are over 300,000 co-operative shops in the countryside selling watches and clocks, bicycles and motorbikes, radio and television sets, cottons, woollens and silks, off-the-peg clothes and perfumes. Who buys these things? Landowners, kulaks, village moneylenders? There aren't any. The Crankshaws and Joneses should wake up from their long sleep.

'Work unlimited, arbitrarily ordered hours': hours, like all other rules of collective farm life, are fixed by the general meeting of members. Of course there are months when the working day is a good deal longer than eight hours—but there are others when it is much shorter, as in agriculture in other countries.

'Have no trade unions': in fact, the two millions working in *mechanised* field and other jobs on collective farms *are* members of trade unions. But the Collective Farm Model Rules, long in force, give collective farmers through their elected management committees all the control over working conditions they require.

'Outside the scope of social services': hundreds of thousands of accident or disability pensioners, millions of women in maternity hospitals, have been for years the responsibility of the Ministry for Social Welfare. They have in the last two years been joined by 12 million collective farmers on retirement pension. The third Congress of Collective Farmers introduced all forms of social insurance in November 1969: sick pay equal to at least 90 per cent of previous earnings, access to rest homes and sanatoria, etc., financed by a central 2.4 per cent levy on collective farm profits, supplemented by the state. As for medical service and education—which are also part of 'social services'—they have been developing

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in the countryside, under the appropriate Ministries ever since the October revolution.

'No right to the labour book': nonsense! All collective farmers have one, recording their jobs, pay and bonuses, and distinctions as workers (but *not* punishments!). Each collective farm had its own type of book: the November 1969 Collective Farmers' Congress decided to introduce a uniform pattern.

'Cannot leave the farm': this is, perhaps, the most outrageous challenge of all to ordinary common sense. Soviet economic journals frequently discuss the problems raised by the *constant* flow of young people, in particular, from the collective farms to the towns. And how is it that the town population increased from 99,978,000 on January 15, 1959, to 136,003,000 on the same date last year, while the rural population went down over the same period from 108,800,000 to 105,745,000? Were the country folk practising birth control on an immense scale, and townspeople the reverse? On the contrary: village folk in the USSR have much larger families. The fact is that they *were* leaving the collective farms—and taking their work books with them: and anyone who has studied Soviet factories knows that they were welcome recruits to industry.

It is time our troglodyte 'Kremlinologists' reckoned with all these elementary facts.

LABOUR MONTHLY FORTY YEARS AGO

I have just returned from a ten days' tour amongst the miners in Wales. I had not been there for a considerable time previously and I am glad to be able to refute from my own experience reports declaring that the old time militancy had disappeared from some districts and indifference had taken its place . . . it removed any qualms I may have had as to the actual mental attitude of the miners of South Wales from the revolutionary standpoint. I am quite sure the men in the Welsh coalfield will be ready to go any length as soon as the hour shall arrive, which in my opinion is not far off. What a great responsibility rests upon comrades who have had opportunities of gaining experience and who may be called upon to fill responsible positions! Let us demonstrate our readiness, our capacity and devotion to the greatest cause the world knows, confident that if this be done the rank and file will be found sound as a bell.

From 'Impressions of South Wales', by Tom Mann,
Labour Monthly, February 1931)

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Fifty Fighting Years (1)

THE RISING TIDE TO THE GENERAL STRIKE 1921-1926

R. Palme Dutt

The early volumes of Labour Monthly *are a bibliographical rarity and command so high a price that reproductions of them (by the Johnson Reprint Company) are being sold at over £14 a volume. In commemoration of this fiftieth anniversary year we are proposing to refresh memories and bring to the knowledge of readers some record of the part our journal has played in the great events of those years, and the contributors, British and international, who honoured us with their participation on a broad progressive front in our journal from the earliest number onwards and helped to make possible its achievement. This first instalment covers the years 1921-26. Editorial Board.*

THE birth of *Labour Monthly* in July, 1921, took place at a moment of a low ebb, heavy trials and setbacks of the labour movement in face of a heavy capitalist offensive. There was need of a fresh impetus to meet new conditions and chart the new path of advance. The post-war upsurge from 1917 onwards culminating in the victorious Council of Action in 1920 which had defeated the anti-Soviet war plans of the Lloyd George Government, had given place to a slump of unprecedented severity, with unemployment reaching two millions in June, 1921, and with a series of industrial defeats. The Triple Alliance of the miners, railwaymen, and transport workers had collapsed on 'Black Friday' in April, 1921, and this had just taken place, and was the centre of heated controversy. A defeat of the miners by the end of June was followed by a cotton lock-out and a disastrous engineering lock-out of 1922 which reimposed the strangling negotiation procedure that today continues to be used. By the end of 1921 wage-cuts averaging 8s. a week had been imposed on six million workers; between 1921 and 1923 TUC membership dropped by over two millions; and the Congress in September, 1921, was described by 'experienced observers' as 'the most despondent and dispirited they have seen in recent times'. Internationally also capitalism had defeated the post-war revolutionary working class challenge everywhere except in Soviet Russia,

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where the Soviet people, backed by international working class solidarity, had successfully maintained the first victorious socialist revolution against the assault of the interventionist armies of Britain and all the capitalist powers, but at a terrible cost in war destruction and in the heritage of economic ruin, from which they had to undertake the difficult task of economic reconstruction, through the phase of the New Economic Policy, to advance to the building of socialism. In Britain Lloyd George, who had deceived the electors by his promises of 'homes for heroes', was still Prime Minister, with the bellicose Winston Churchill as his Colonial Secretary, while the British Empire had expanded by a further million square miles to its largest extent with the establishment of the new so-called 'Middle-Eastern Empire'.

From the outset *Labour Monthly* defined the task as the necessity to recognise the new situation internationally and in Britain, and to prepare a new stage of advance in the trade union and labour movement. Rejecting and exposing the western capitalist slogan of 'Back to Pre-War' and 'Normalcy' (President Harding) our journal quoted with approval the remark of Bernard Shaw at a committee endeavouring to estimate its budget for a normal year: 'There will be no more normal years.' While upholding a consistent editorial line of Marxist analysis of the situation internationally and in Britain, and the consequent tasks for advance, *Labour Monthly* practised from the outset the policy of promoting a broad front of progressive co-operation and opened its pages to a wide range of contributors to discuss common problems of the movement.

Thus in the first issue in July, 1921, G. D. H. Cole wrote his view of '"Black Friday" and After', while in the following month the General Secretary of the Transport Workers Federation, Robert Williams, who bore part responsibility for the decision to call off joint action with the miners, wrote his defence and answer to Cole. Controversy on the tactical questions of violence and the labour movement found expression in opposing views of Gerald Gould, leader-writer of the *Daily Herald*, and the Marxist theoretician William Paul. William Mellor, the former leading exponent with Cole of Guild Socialism, wrote his 'Critique of Guild Socialism' in November, 1921; and in the following month this received a reply from the General Secretary of the Builders' Guild, Malcolm Sparkes, under the title 'A Guildsman Replies'. Tom Mann, the veteran working class leader and hero of the famous 1889 dock strike which brought in the New Unionism, wrote an account of his development, 'From Syndicalism to Communism', in October, 1922.

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Bernard Shaw, in close touch with the journal from its inception, contributed in October, 1921, his famous 7,000-words 'The Dictatorship of the Proletariat' written on the suggestion of our journal and following joint discussion, after a lecture he had given, in which he exercised all his debating skill and wit to combine the most merciless exposure of the hypocrisy of capitalist class society with parallel exposure of the contradictions and weaknesses of the proletariat in Britain, but finally came down on the side of the dictatorship of the proletariat as he understood it. Shaw maintained his close and helpful connections with *Labour Monthly* through all the succeeding years, and was especially warm in his greetings on its twentieth anniversary, when he described how, after the failure of the Labour Party to fulfil the hopes of its founders, 'the *Labour Monthly* stepped in and kept the red flag flying while the Labour Party was waving a tattered old Union Jack.'

From the battlefield of the trade unions, among many contributors W. H. Hutchinson, of the Executive of the Engineers and Chairman of the Labour Party in 1919-20, wrote in March, 1922, on 'The Engineering Lock-Out'. From the fight of the left in the Labour Party George Lansbury wrote in June, 1922, on 'Poplar and the Labour Party'.

It should be understood that when *Labour Monthly* was founded there were no bans or proscriptions to prevent full co-operation of all fighters for the aims of the working class and socialism, communist or non-communist. Our journal was thus able to maintain a very wide range of contributors in those early years, and has always, even in subsequent difficult periods, set itself to continue the practice of combining a Marxist outlook with a broad front of co-operation and left unity. When a programme for the united front was adopted by the international communist movement in December, 1921, its first publication in English, in a version specially translated for our journal, appeared in our issue of February 1922, and was all the more welcome to us since we regarded it as reinforcing the general principle of broad left co-operation we had sought to promote since our first number in July, 1921.

Alongside close links and contact with the problems of the British trade union and labour movement, internationalism was the keynote of our journal from the beginning. In the first number in July, 1921, alongside an abridged translation of Lenin's statement on the New Economic Policy (the first to be available in English), Henri Barbusse, then at the height of his international reputation for his anti-war novel *Under Fire*, contributed an article on 'France

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and the Future' in which he declared his 'delight to take advantage of the opportunity given me by *Labour Monthly* to address an English audience', and expressed his conviction that 'Communism is not an aspect of Socialism; it is its very essence . . . Nothing is more mistaken than to present Communism as a doctrine produced by circumstances in the minds of the Germans and the Russians . . . the Communist idea is a logical and necessary outcome of the evolution of the revolutionary theory of those who have thrown themselves against the established order.'

Imperialism and the fight against imperialism was in the forefront of this international outlook from the beginning. In the first number Leonard Woolf, then equally distinguished for his literary connections and for his critical treatment of colonial policy, wrote on 'Economic Imperialism and its Sacred Trust'. Shapurji Saklatvala, the Communist MP for North Battersea from 1922-23 and 1924-29, exposed the British Raj in India. Gandhi had arranged to write an article for our issue of April, 1922, but in that number the explanation had to appear that his arrest on March 10 had prevented him writing the promised article, so that a reprint from his writing had to be substituted. In the field of international politics H. N. Brailsford, author of *The War of Steel and Gold* wrote on the Washington Conference in September, 1921. Alongside a host of foreign correspondents informed comment on foreign affairs was provided regularly by the Foreign Editor of the *Daily Herald* until the connection was broken in 1929; while the witty pen of Karl Radek, who was a close friend of the journal in those early years, threw his sarcastic floodlight on British politics and the international scene.

The sub-title of *Labour Monthly* at its foundation and for many years, expressing its international outlook, was 'A Magazine of International Labour'. All the significant developments, conferences and resolutions of the trade union and labour movement in countries all over the world were followed month by month with careful documentation (space was not so costly then as today, when painfully rigid compression is necessary to cover the key issues all too inadequately in 48 pages). This function helped to establish the international role of the journal which won a considerable circulation and close friends in all the English-speaking countries, the United States, Canada, Australia (where an attempt to ban it was defeated by a campaign led by friends in the Senate), New Zealand, South Africa and the English-reading public in India, as well as in two score other countries all over the world. New ground was broken by the

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authoritative study of social conditions and the labour movement in Japan in our issues of August and September, 1921, by Sanzo Nosaka, then a young man temporarily in London, in two articles entitled 'The Labour Struggle in Japan', which won universal recognition as a classic statement on the development of the labour movement in Japan, on which all such subsequent references had to be based. Nosaka, after having had the honour of being deported by the notorious Basil Thomson at the head of the Special Branch and subsequently Director of Intelligence, and after a lifetime of imprisonment, exile and underground activity, has now for more than thirty years been Chairman of the Communist Party of Japan, which at the last election won over three-and-a-half million votes. It was a pleasure to have his contribution carrying forward his treatment on 'Japan Today' in November, 1959, and further in December, 1968. Sen Katayama, the veteran of the international socialist movement and hero of the famous Plekhanov-Katayama embrace at the Amsterdam International Socialist Congress in 1904 to express working class solidarity in the midst of the Russo-Japanese War, wrote for us in March, 1922, on 'Present Day Japan'. William Z. Foster, then Secretary of the Trade Union Educational League in the United States wrote for us on 'The Left Wing and the American Labour Movement' (September, 1922). Gordon Childe, who was to become the recognised leading authority, on a Marxist basis, on European and West Asian archaeology, wrote an inside picture of some aspects of Labour politics in Australia in 'A Labour Premier Meets his Masters' (May, 1924).

Philips Price, whose illuminating reports as correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* of the whole process of the Russian revolution had won him universal recognition, wrote regularly a penetrating and informed survey of developments in Germany between 1921 and 1924. Already in January, 1923, in his article on 'Bavaria and the German Fascisti' he gave the first warning analysis of the emergence of the German Nazi Party, ten months before Hitler's first attempted coup in November, 1923. From the outset close attention was given to the significance of fascism. Two articles surveying 'A History of Fascism' by an Italian authority were published in February and March, 1923, and Klara Zetkin's brilliant analysis of fascism in August, 1923.

A special feature through all our issues was the publication of documents and texts of Marx previously not available in English, as for example Marx's Address to the Communist League in 1850, first published in English in our issue of September, 1922. Max

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Beer here performed invaluable service in making available in our pages month by month the fruits of his research in documents of Marxism.

Harry Pollitt wrote his first article in *Labour Monthly* in September, 1922. He was then still carrying on his skilled work as a boilermaker in East Ham. He was nationally known, both in the trade union field and for his political Hands Off Russia agitation in East London, which culminated in the stopping of the Jolly George. His tireless participation as a delegate in each successive Trades Union Congress and Labour Party Conference had marked him out as the ablest and most persuasive spokesman of the left, regarded then, before the era of bans had begun, as destined for the highest honours in the labour movement. Pollitt's first contribution on 'The Future of the General Council' revealed that combination of militancy and constructive approach which was always his hallmark. This was the beginning of a close co-operation of Pollitt with *Labour Monthly* through all the succeeding years, with regular articles on each significant TUC and Labour Party Conference and at every critical turn in the movement.

By 1923 the beginning of an upward surge in the labour movement from the low point of 1922 could be discerned, with the active role of Gallacher, Hannington and many others. A visible expression of this new advance was shown in the role of the Communist Party, which had carried through its reorganisation to a basis of mass revolutionary work, and whose organ soared to a circulation of over fifty thousand by March, 1923. The development of left-wing 'minority movements' in the trade unions among the miners and in other industries which found significant expression in the election of A. J. Cook as General Secretary of the Miners' Federation in the spring of 1924, culminated in the formation of the National Minority Movement in August, 1924, which rapidly won such wide support that by the time of its Conference of Action in March, 1926, its delegates represented nearly a million trade unionists.

In the political field, at the parliamentary general election in December, 1923, the Labour Party won over 30 per cent of the votes and 191 seats; and in January, 1924 the first Labour Government in Britain came into office on a minority basis, with Liberal support, under the premiership of Ramsay MacDonald. This meant a historic step forward in the political experience of the British labour movement, and brought to the forefront all the basic questions of class relations. At the very moment of the Labour Government coming into office the locomotive engineers' strike brought all the

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issues sharply into view. Pressure of the working class movement from below compelled speedy full diplomatic recognition of the Soviet Union, while MacDonald was still hesitating and dilatory. Pressure of the working class similarly compelled the withdrawal of the Campbell prosecution (on which J. R. Campbell wrote 'The Campbell Case' in our issue of November, 1924), which was used by the Conservative and Liberal Parties as their pretext to bring down the Government. On the other hand, Ramsay MacDonald revealed his alignment with his sponsoring of the American-inspired bankers' plan for capitalist stabilisation in Western and Central Europe. Similarly in the general election in October MacDonald allowed the Foreign Office to publish with the use of his signature as if testifying to its authenticity the notorious 'Zinoviev Letter' forgery, which helped to engineer the defeat of Labour and bring in a hard-faced Tory Government determined to smash the rising threat of the working class expressed in the trade unions.

In this rapidly moving situation, with all the sharp issues of class relations in the period of the first Labour Government and its sequel, *Labour Monthly* was in its element in responding to the new questions arising: the index of 1924 shows no less than a score of articles dealing with every different aspect of the policy of the Labour Government and the attitude of the working class movement; five on the estimation of the political character and role of MacDonald; as well as the full treatment of the gathering trade union issues and significant developments abroad. The analysis of 'The Diplomacy of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald' in two articles in January and February, 1925, by a contributor signing himself 'U.D.C.', aroused through its obvious inside knowledge some perturbation in Whitehall and Transport House. In general the prescience shown in the very careful estimation of the political role of MacDonald in a series of articles during this period revealed a political judgement whose justification was abundantly proved in the final outcome, but only came to be painfully learned by the general labour movement seven years later, after the open betrayal and transition to join the Tories.

In this new situation of 1924 *Labour Monthly* took a constructive initiative to promote left co-operation and provide a platform for a public expression of those in the upper leadership of the trade union and labour movement who were ready to recognise the need for a review and advance in the direction of more active class policies. In January, 1924, W. H. Hutchinson, afterwards President of the

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Amalgamated Engineering Union, opened the series 'Towards a New Policy'. It can now be related that after Hutchinson's article had appeared he told the Editor that he had been hauled over the coals by his colleagues on the Labour Party Executive for writing this article in this militant organ. The Editor expressed full sympathy and concern that Hutchinson should not be placed in a difficult position, and suggested that the best course would be if Hutchinson could arrange for one of his friends, say George Hicks, of the Building Workers and the General Council, to follow-up with a further article, and this would remove the position of isolation, since it would be less easy to fire at the two of them. Hutchinson adopted the idea with alacrity and went off to see George Hicks; so that the Editor could sit back and wait while Hutchinson did the work and arranged the contribution from George Hicks which appeared in the February issue under the title 'An Immediate Industrial Charter'. He was followed in March by Will Lawther of the Durham Miners' Association and Labour Party Executive; in April Robert Williams, Secretary of the Transport Workers' Federation and due to become Chairman of the Labour Party in 1925; in May A. A. Purcell, MP, Chairman of the General Council of the TUC; in June A. J. Cook, the newly-elected Secretary of the Miners' Federation, who entitled his contribution 'Trade Unionism at the Cross-Roads'; and in July John Bromley, General Secretary of the Locomotive Engineers. In all, this symposium 'Towards a New Policy' from January to July, 1924, drew in three members of the General Council of the TUC, including the Chairman, three members of the Labour Party Executive, and four General Secretaries of major unions.

The significance of this series appearing in the first half of 1924 at the same time as the MacDonald Labour Government was revealing its character, was its demonstration that the advance of left-wing trends in the working class movement was finding a measure of reflection among some of the representatives of the upper trade union leadership. This development, which had thus found a first public expression in our pages in the first half of 1924 was carried forward in the following months with the further active role of the left grouping, headed by Purcell and Hicks, in the General Council, seeking to promote some progressive policies, especially international trade union unity, and establishing friendly relations with the Soviet trade unions. By the end of 1924 an Anglo-Russian Joint Consultative Committee of the TUC and the Soviet Trade Unions was constituted.

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This left advance, in which our journal was one of the organs of expression, sped forward in 1925. The discredit of the MacDonald Labour Government and the offensive of the Tory Government intensified the determination of the active workers to advance to a militant policy in the industrial field. Once again the miners were in the centre of the fight. This time there was wide determination that unity in action should not be lacking. During the first half of 1925 this theme was ceaselessly in the forefront. 'The Problem of the Hour—Is Unity Possible?' was the title of the article of A. J. Cook in our issue in the crucial month of July, 1925, when the crisis came to a head. The TUC set up a special committee which drew up plans for declaring an embargo on the transport of coal in the event of a miners' lock-out. The Special Conference of Trade Union Executives on July 30 enthusiastically endorsed these plans. In face of this united stand the Government and the coal-owners made a tactical retreat on July 31, withdrawing the lock-out notices and providing a nine-months subsidy for the coal industry, nominally to provide time for a Royal Commission to prepare a report, in practice to give the Government time to prepare its measures to break the resistance of the trade unions. This temporary retreat of the Government was the initial victory of working class solidarity which became dubbed 'Red Friday' in contrast to the shameful collapse of 'Black Friday' four years previously.

'Red Friday' and the ensuing nine months opened the severest testing-time for the working class movement.

On the one hand, there was widespread elation over the victory achieved. An enormous impetus was given to militant development. The Scarborough TUC in September adopted with enthusiasm a series of policy resolutions more militant in character than any Congress before or since, so that Pollitt could describe it in our journal as 'the most important and momentous in the history of the British trade union movement'; at the same time he added a warning on its shortcomings in respect of concrete decisions for action. The atmosphere of a swing to the left was so marked in this period that by March, 1926, Walter Citrine, Assistant Secretary of the TUC, was at his own request contributing an article to *Labour Monthly*.

On the other hand, the reactionary capitalist offensive was preparing. The Government was using every day of the nine months to build up its strike-breaking organisation; mobilise and train volunteers; and organise the most elaborate apparatus of repression to prepare the introduction of emergency conditions in all parts of the country. On their side, the right-wing Labour Party leadership met

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the militant challenge of the Scarborough TUC by adopting at the Liverpool Labour Party Conference in the following month a series of reactionary decisions, including the completion of its system of anti-communist bans with a call to the trade unions to abandon their democratic rights of free choice of their delegates. This contrast of Liverpool and Scarborough demonstrated the profound truth that a high level of militancy in the industrial field is not enough unless accompanied by corresponding political expression. The Marxist vanguard, represented by the Communists, who were able to play their part in co-operation with the left at Scarborough to reach the militant decisions there recorded, were artificially excluded from participation at Liverpool; and, while the Liverpool Conference was based for its main composition on the same trade unions as Scarborough, but with the exclusion of the Communists, the decisions at Liverpool, in the midst of the critical nine months leading up to the General Strike were noted by *Labour Monthly* as demonstrating that, despite the high level of militancy of the trade unions in the industrial field, 'revolutionary political understanding is still lacking; in consequence the reins of leadership remain in the hands of the old and experienced reformist leaders.'

Every day of the nine months was vital for the necessity of counter-preparation by the trade unions to meet the Government plans for assault. But the General Council remained passive.

Every day of these nine months the miners' leaders, the militant trade unionists and the Communist Party sounded the urgent call for preparations. This was voiced in every issue of *Labour Monthly* during these nine months, not only by the Editorial Board, but by the leading officers of the Miners' Federation.

Immediately after the Liverpool Labour Party Conference had given the signal, the Government began its offensive to disarm the working class by first picking off the vanguard, the Communists. Scarcely had the Liverpool Conference disbanded than on October 14 twelve principal Communist leaders were arrested. The Associate Editor of *Labour Monthly* was among the twelve arrested. The initial hearing was adjourned while a Special Branch representative was sent to Brussels to include in the trial the Editor, who was arrested on November 5 and committed to prison in Brussels; however, the head of the Brussels Bar took up the case, and an organised international campaign, with the intervention of Shaw, Wells and other personalities, finally secured his release. As the conditions of a pre-fascist prison in Belgium were highly superior to those of an English prison, with recognition of political prisoners, and the

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opportunity to use pen and paper, the notes on 'Class Justice' in January, 1926, were actually written in the Prison de Forest in Brussels, but a sense of reticence led to resisting the temptation to put the address alongside the date.

The fateful nine months led up to the culminating confrontation of the General Strike of May 1926—the highest level of class battles in the history of the British working class movement. But in fact the General Strike took place at the time of the Government's choosing, when the Government's preparations were complete; and it was finally forced by the Government on a reluctant trade union leadership who found themselves knocking vainly at the door of a closed and darkened 10 Downing Street for further negotiations. Even so, the overwhelming response of the working class staggered alike the Government and the reluctant reformist leaders, so that finally the battle could only be brought to an end by direct betrayal from above, calling off the struggle at the moment when the workers' strength was at its height, in the name of deceitful promises by the Government, and opening the way for the Government's subsequent ruthless offensive, victimisation, starvation of the miners and anti-union legislation.

With the ending of the General Strike on May 12 the conditions seemed impossible for producing a June *Labour Monthly*. But the miracle was accomplished through the initiative and energy of the Associate Editor, who had already immediately following his release from prison after his six months' sentence played an active part in the highly successful front of the fight of the General Strike in Northumberland and Durham. The June issue appeared with a full analysis of all the lessons of the experience of the General Strike which still remains of value today.

Within twenty four hours of his release from prison Harry Pollitt (who had undergone a twelve months' sentence) wrote 'A Message' for *Labour Monthly* which appeared in the issue of October, 1926:

> I cannot do better than to give the thoughts that ran in my mind immediately I heard in prison that the General Strike had been called. I thought then of a series of articles in *Labour Monthly* in 1924 in which Comrades Purcell, Hutchinson, Cook, Lawther, Williams, Bromley and Hicks took part, and what a difference there would, and could have been in the whole official direction of the Movement if these comrades had then been prepared to organise their forces definitely, and fight for the realisation of the new policy upon which there was at least a common agreement.
>
> When the call came the workers responded to a man, but the existing

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leadership failed, and in the moment of failure there was no difference between the Rights and the Lefts.

This was a complete justification of the whole attitude of *Labour Monthly* right from its inception. This, as I see the position, completes a kind of first phase in the task that the *Monthly* has in hand, and now it is more necessary than ever that it should receive a wide support from the active workers, particularly in the Trade Unions and Labour Parties.

(Next month the second section of this review of 'Fifty Fighting Years' will cover 'The Fight for Unity Against Fascism and War' during the years 1927-39.)

BOOKS

The American Corporation
Richard J. Barber
MacGibbon & Kee, 310 pp., 50s. (£2.50)

EVERYONE INTERESTED in politics today realises the importance of the rapid growth of the big monopolies. But Richard J. Barber's book is a fascinating and somewhat frightening study of the power and influences of what he terms the 'oligopolies', their influence in political, social and economic development and the vast power which they wield. His main theme is the inability of government to curb and regulate these giant industrial and geographically diversified conglomerates whom he terms the frontrunners in internationalism. The flag now follows the trade.

The book deals mainly with the growth of the giant American corporations into world wide economic combines, fraught with the most serious political and social consequences which democracy can ignore only at its own peril. Just to give one example, General Motors has 735,000 employees, 1.3 million shareholders, thousands of suppliers and plants in nearly every state, and operates in 24 foreign countries. While the book, as the title indicates, is about the big American corporations, it deals also with the belated attempt of Western Europe and Japan, through mergers, to try and match the growth and penetration of American big business on a global scale, with many statistics and references to their penetration into the underdeveloped countries.

The sections dealing with the effect on the American labour movement are of particular interest. The author gives statistics to show that from 1945 until the present, the percentage of non-agricultural labour organised in unions has shrunk from 30 per cent to 25 per cent because of changes in the nature of industry due to automation, technological advance, new products, materials and other factors resulting in less and less of the working force involved in manual work.

He also shows how, because of diversification, the demands of the unions can be defeated by refusal to negotiate with strikers in one section of their empire while other sections continue to accumulate their profits. While the author believes that democracy and human welfare are endangered by these enormous unchecked corporate 'states' that transcend traditional state boundaries, he fails to draw any of the necessary political conclusions. Being a defender

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of the capitalist system, the question of socialisation or nationalisation are mentioned only in passing as one of the hazards of capital investment, especially in the emerging independent countries.

Nevertheless, anyone who wishes to have a graphic and comprehensive picture and understanding of the dangers of the now rampant growth of monopoly and the new conglomerates should read and study this book which is full of factual and up to date material.

C. A. DOYLE

Politics and Society in the USSR

David Lane

Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 616 pp., £5

THE CLASSICAL curate's egg was 'good in parts'. The good parts of this book are the documents: Constitution of USSR, Party Rules, and 1968 Marriage Law.

But the text, with its massive hotch-potch of sometimes contradictory quotations, is a morass. On June 22, 1941, the student is told: 'Russia was at war. The Red Army was smashed. On the first day the Red Air Force was destroyed' (p. 108). If true, Hitler had obviously won. But on the next page: 'After its initial defeats, the Red Army recovered' (p. 109). It obviously had neither been smashed nor destroyed.

On another subject, income differentiation: at one point the American, De Witt, is quoted to show that the maximum range of incomes is about 120 to 1 (pp. 399-400). Three pages later the American, Lenski, puts the range at 300 to 1 (p. 403). No attempt is made either to point out or to explain the discrepancy. But we *are* told that in the US it is 11,000 to 1 (p. 403).

On management and trade unions we are told that Soviet trade unions 'are not official "rubber stamps" ' (p. 313). Well and good. But the author also quotes, apparently with approval, Margaret Dewar's assertion that up to the time of Stalin's death there were 'no essentially novel or advanced methods of disciplining labour or increasing productivity' (p. 403). Yet a book which purports to cover the history of more than 50 years as well as contemporary facts should on no account exclude mention of Subbotniks, udarniks or shock-brigades, socialist competition and Stakhanovites. Only this latter *is* mentioned, in a quotation from the American, Inkeles, calling Stakhanovites 'rate-busters' (p. 405—not indexed). Nor, in dealing with management, Party and trade unions, should the famous '*treugolnik* (triangle) be omitted, since it played such a large part in Soviet factory administration.

It is a pity that David Lane has fought shy of recommending any book which is consistently favourable to the USSR. Quotations from Rothstein's *Man and Plan* would have helped to fill the above glaring omissions. McAulay does not suffice. Again, the Webbs are quoted for their definition of trade unionism, but there is no mention whatever—in reams of books mentioned—that they ever wrote a classic work on the USSR, *Soviet Communism.*

On marriage, David Lane trots out the hoary story of the 'nationalisation of women' as if it were established history. He even mentions the town of Vladimir for an appearance of authenticity (but gives no reference to his source). He would have done far better to have concentrated on a field which he knew, than to range so pretentiously wide while drawing on a hotch-potch of other people's opinions (and—apart from Soviet sources—not those most friendly to the USSR).

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Tables and diagrams abound, sometimes useful, sometimes confusing. A pity, because a book is still needed which would do in the 1970s what the Webbs did in the 1930s.

PAT SLOAN

The Rise of Free Trade Imperialism

Bernard Semmel

Cambridge University Press,
250 pp., 70s. (£3.50)

IN THE OLD DAYS disputes between economists of capitalism could be fought solely with words, not facts and figures; the 'proof' of which theory was right, which wrong, lay partly in the reasonableness of their argument, partly in the force of their rhetoric, and mainly in the relative power of the naked class interests lying only just beneath the surface of the debates.

When trade was necessary for capitalism, capitalism's theorists proved that trade was an eternal truth of economic welfare. When protection was expedient, suddenly protection was just and justified. Competition or monopoly, colony or neo-colony, free market or state intervention: each in turn was proved to be the foundation of economic advance.

Semmel's book is an analysis—a very close, precise, detailed analysis of texts, speeches, pamphlets and books (though unfortunately not of profits, rents and trade statistics)—of one example of the links between theoreticians and profit. His argument is this:

In the late eighteenth century, a theory called 'mercantilism' had been accepted concerning colonies, that they were a more useful source of raw materials and custom than was international trade. However, in the nineteenth century a new outlook gained support which emphasised especially free trade—trade should be carried on without import or export duties, quotas, or preference, equally with all countries. This *appeared* to be an anti-imperialist ideology, since it was opposed to the old form of colonialism. But it was not anti-imperialist—it was really a *new ideology* of imperialism. As one of its supporters said in 1846, free trade was the means by which 'foreign nations would become valuable colonies to us, without imposing on us the responsibility of governing them.'

The reason for this was that Britain in this period was the leading industrial country in the world, having carried through the industrial revolution much earlier than other countries. With such a powerful lead, free trade would *increase and perpetuate* this advantage, since no other country would be able to compete effectively. In other words, the free trade era was not the decline of the old colonial empire—it was the era in which the foundations of the new imperialism, the final stage of capitalism described by Lenin, were laid.

Malthus (who usually took the side of the landlords in this battle; they did not want free trade as it would lower the price of grain) wrote an interesting passage in 1820: 'The most distressing and disheartening of all cries to the mass of humanity—the cry of the master manufacturers and merchants for low wages, to enable them to find a market for their exports.' 'If a country can only be rich by running a successful race for low wages, I should be disposed to say at once "perish such riches!" '

The heresies of capitalism, as well as its economic problems and ideologies, seem to have a certain continuity.

PHIL GOODWIN

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GOLDEN JUBILEE RESPONSE

READERS will be pleased to see this month's Fund total. This time of year is always a particularly good one for the Fund, with subscribers sending in donations with their subscription renewals; even so £130 is something of a record.

A Plymouth reader sent a donation of £11 'to cover costs and as a donation to the Fund', and adds: 'It will be very necessary to continue publication this year as political events will require all the propaganda we can get to blunt the edge of threatened legislation. The trade union bill will no doubt react against its authors and cause an increase of activity amongst trade unionists, and that is where our journal will make its impact.'

Many long-standing friends of *LM* have expressed their congratulations on our fiftieth anniversary. A reader from South Wales says that she has bought *LM* since 1921, the year it was founded, and still finds it indispensable. Another writes: 'I have been a continuous reader of *LM* since 1935 so you will appreciate I am something of a veteran. For two years I have been a retirement pensioner and naturally money is rather tight, but I am enclosing £1 with my best wishes.' From Perthshire came a donation of £1 with the message: 'Wish I could do more. Thanks for the best four bob's worth in the country, and more power to your arm.'

These are just a few of the many greetings we have received and we would like to thank all those who have made continuous publication over the last fifty years possible. If this kind of response is kept up it will certainly be a 'Golden' Jubilee.

Nicola Seyd

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